

Beer & distilled spirits (continued)

Locations of public hearings on ingredient labeling of beer & distilled spirits have been changed. The new locations are:

Beer

10 a.m. April 15

Federal Energy Administration Conference Room
Room 3400, 1200 Pennsylvania Ave. NW
Washington, DC

Distilled spirits

10 a.m. April 16

Federal Energy Administration Conference Room
Room 3400, 1200 Pennsylvania Ave. NW
Washington, DC

Details—*Federal Register*: March 6, page 10476; Feb. 11, page 6354; Jan. 30, page 4428. CONSUMER REGISTER: Feb. 15 & March 1.

Bumpers (continued)

On March 13, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) announced it was going to retain the present requirement on bumpers that would protect safety-related car parts in crashes at speeds up to 5 miles per hour (8 kilometers per hour). On Jan. 2, NHTSA had proposed to reduce the speed to 2.5 miles per hour (4 kilometers per hour) [CONSUMER REGISTER: Feb. 1 & Feb. 15]. Insurance companies, members of Congress & others objected to lowering the performance level of the bumpers.

Details—*Federal Register*: March 12, page 11598; March 18, page 12287.

Intermediate care facilities

April 3 is deadline for comments on Health, Education & Welfare Dept.'s (HEW) proposal to establish "rights" for residents of intermediate care facilities (ICFs) participating under the Medicaid program. ICFs are nursing homes that offer some nursing supervision in addition to help with personal needs.

These proposed rights are similar to those that became effective December 1974 for residents of skilled nursing facilities (SNFs). SNFs are nursing homes that are staffed to make round-the-clock nursing facilities available to residents who need them [CONSUMER REGISTER: Nov. 1, 1973].

The proposed regulations are designed to assure that a patient in an ICF knows what rights & responsibilities he has—such as:

- Knowing his medical condition;
- Knowing what financial transactions have been made on his behalf;
- Receiving mail unopened;
- Participating in religious, social & community affairs of his choice;
- Speaking with & being visited by persons of his choice.

Details—*Federal Register*: March 4, page 8956; Oct. 3, 1974, page 35774; Jan. 17, 1974, page 2219. CONSUMER REGISTER: Feb. 1, 1974. Send comments to Administrator, Social & Rehabilitation Service, Health, Education & Welfare Dept., Box 2366, Washington, DC 20013.

Sudden infant death

April 4 is deadline for comments on Health, Education & Welfare Dept.'s (HEW) proposal to provide grants to public & nonprofit private groups in an effort to learn about the causes of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS),

or "crib death." Funds would also be provided to inform & counsel families whose babies have died as a result of SIDS.

HEW says 7,500 to 10,000 apparently healthy babies die from SIDS every year & that SIDS is the major cause of death in infants more than one month old. At present, SIDS cannot be predicted or prevented—& parents often feel guilty, wondering if they were in any way responsible for their infant's death.

Details—*Federal Register*: March 5, page 10318. Send comments to Division of Policy Development, Bureau of Community Health Services, Health Services Administration, Room 6-17, 5600 Fishers Lane, Rockville, MD 20852.

Meat & poultry products (continued)

April 7 is new deadline for comments on Agriculture Dept.'s proposal to require manufacturers & distributors of meat & poultry products shipped over state lines to label the products in such a way that consumers know where they came from—such as "Danish ham," "German sausage" & "Virginia ham." Several meat & poultry industry associations asked for an extension of the deadline.

Details—*Federal Register*: March 5, page 10191; Nov. 27, 1974, page 41381. CONSUMER REGISTER: Jan. 15. Send comments to Hearing Clerk, Agriculture Dept., Washington, DC 20250.

Playground equipment

April 7 is deadline for comments on Consumer Product Safety Commission's (CPSC) invitation to develop safety specifications or submit an existing standard designed to reduce the hazards associated with public playground equipment. The hazards include sharp points & edges, "S-hooks," rough surfaces & falls.

CPSC says public playground equipment (such as swings, slides & monkey bars) was responsible for 55,000 accidents that required hospital emergency room treatment in 1973.

CPSC is interested in hearing from consumer organizations as well as from industry, trade associations & technical experts.

Details—*Federal Register*: March 7, page 10706. Send inquiries & submit proposed standards to Secretary, Consumer Product Safety Commission, Washington, DC 20207; or call 202-634-7700.

Toy safety (continued)

April 10 is new deadline for Consumer Product Safety Commission's (CPSC) proposals to ban toys having sharp edges & points. Toy Manufacturers of America & Hobby Industry of America, Inc. asked for more time to comment.

Details—*Federal Register*: March 20, page 12678. Send comments to Secretary, Consumer Product Safety Commission, Washington, DC 20207.

Monkeys

April 14 is deadline for comments on Health, Education & Welfare Dept.'s (HEW) proposal to ban the commercial importation of monkeys, chimpanzees, apes—& other non-human primates—as pets.

HEW says monkeys "are a significant source of infectious disease affecting humans." Such diseases include hepatitis, tuberculosis, monkey B virus infections, salmonellosis & parasitic infections, & consumers could be exposed to these diseases just by visiting retail stores that sell the monkeys. HEW estimates that between 75,000 &

100,000 monkeys are imported into the U.S. each year. About half of these are used for scientific purposes & the other half for pets. Because monkeys are very useful in the scientific study of many human diseases, HEW is not proposing that the importation of research animals be banned. Zoos could continue to import monkeys for exhibition purposes.

HEW is also proposing to tighten quarantine & disease control requirements for monkeys that are allowed into the country.

Details—*Federal Register*: March 14, page 11887. Send comments to Director, Center for Disease Control, 1600 Clifton Road, NE, Atlanta, GA 30333.

Speed limit

April 21 is deadline for comments on Transportation Dept.'s proposal to require states to certify they are enforcing the 55-miles-per-hour (88 kilometers per hour) national maximum speed limit on all public highways. This requirement would implement provisions of the Federal-Aid Highway Amendments of 1974 (P.L. 93-643) which established a permanent national speed limit. The amendments also give Transportation authority to withhold approval of Federal-aid highway projects in any state which does not certify by January 1 of each year that it is enforcing the speed limit requirement.

Most states have been using a system of speed monitoring—and resulting figures show that during 1974, 53% of motorists were traveling at 55 mph or less. Transportation wants to improve this level of compliance & says a high level of enforcement will be needed.

The purpose of imposing a lower speed limit was to save fuel, but National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) says that lower speeds also saved lives. At the end of 1974, the number of highway deaths had fallen to 46,000, a reduction of 9,000 from the year before.

Details—*Federal Register*: March 6, page 10481. Send comments to Docket No. 75-4; Notice 1, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, Docket Section, 400 7th St., SW, Washington, DC 20590.

Transportation for elderly & handicapped

April 30 is deadline for comments on Urban Mass Transportation Administration's (UMTA) proposal to make public transportation more accessible to the elderly & handicapped.

One purpose of the proposed rule is to provide usable transportation for the elderly & handicapped without developing separate accommodations. Elderly & handicapped are generally opposed to a separate transportation system because they feel such a system would segregate them from the rest of the public. Rather, they favor elimination of physical barriers to mass transportation, especially for the wheelchair user.

Highlights of the proposal include requirements for:

- Local transportation planners & operating officials to identify travel requirements of elderly & handicapped persons.
- Rapid rail facilities & other grade-separated systems to be built so the passenger platform is at about the same height as the entrance to the train, thus enabling a passenger to roll a wheelchair or walk into the train

car. UMTA is interested in comments as to when wheelchair tie-downs should be required (none are available commercially at the present time).

- Buses to have low floors plus a ramp or lift device to accommodate wheelchair users. (This is the Transbus program that is being tested experimentally for normal city service.)

- Stations, "stops," fare collection systems & other fixed facilities to be designed or altered to make them accessible to the elderly & handicapped.

- Lower rates (not more than one-half rates charged general public at peak hours) to be charged the elderly & handicapped during non-peak hours on projects funded by Transportation Dept.

In addition to asking for written comments, UMTA is holding regional public hearings. Persons making oral statements, are encouraged to submit the substance of their remarks in written form either at the hearing or by mail.

Each hearing will have sessions at 9:30 a.m. & at 7:30 p.m. Dates & locations of the hearings follow:

April 7—Los Angeles, CA
Los Angeles Convention Center

April 9—Denver, CO
Denver RTD Auditorium

April 11—Chicago, IL
City Council Chambers
City Hall

April 15—St. Petersburg, FL
Fox Hall
Eckerd College

April 17—Boston, MA
John F. Kennedy Federal Bldg.

April 22—Washington, DC
Auditorium
Health, Education & Welfare Dept.

Details—*Federal Register*: Feb. 26, page 8314. CONSUMER NEWS: Feb. 15. Send comments to Docket #74-03, Office of the Chief Counsel, Urban Mass Transportation Administration, Washington, DC 20590.

Investment advisers

April 30 is deadline for comments on Securities & Exchange Commission's (SEC) proposal to require investment advisers to furnish clients & prospective clients with information that would help them evaluate the services to be provided, including: (1) qualifications of advisory personnel; (2) services offered; (3) advisory procedures & practices; (4) affiliations with brokers & dealers; & (5) advisory fees.

SEC says investment advisers would include this information in their advertising & sales literature, but in any event it would be furnished to clients & prospective clients at least 48 hours before investment contracts are extended or entered into. SEC believes the information on qualifications of advisory personnel would help clients in comparing the services of different advisers. The information would not be submitted to SEC but would be kept on file & reviewed by SEC as part of its investment adviser inspection program.

Details—*Federal Register*: March 14, page 11897. Send comments to Secretary, Securities & Exchange Commission, Washington, DC 20549.

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Rate Register

● **Transportation Dept.** is planning an interagency review of U.S. international air transportation which will be concerned with such issues as (1) foreign & domestic subsidies; (2) role of rate regulation, rate & fare levels; (3) role of travel agents & tour operators; (4) U.S. industry role in conserving energy & need for new types of planes in the future; & (5) safety, energy, environmental & security standards.

Details—*Federal Register*: March 6, page 10507. Public comments are invited, by April 7. They should be sent to Executive Secretariat, International Aviation Policy Review, c/o John B. Flynn, Transportation Dept., Washington, DC 20592.

● On Feb. 27, National Airlines (NAL) proposed to Civil Aeronautics Board (CAB) an experimental "no-frills" 35% discount air fare that would be available in specified compartments on all its wide-bodied planes (DC10s & 747s). No meals or alcoholic beverages would be served to passengers traveling on this plan, nor would there be any confirmed reservations before consumers pay their fares. NAL would sell coffee, milk & soft drinks on these flights.

If CAB does not disapprove the plan, the fare would be effective from April 14 to June 30 & from Sept. 3 to Dec. 16. It would be available Monday through Thursday.

Some airlines have filed complaints against NAL's "no-frills" fare. But CAB's Office of the Consumer Advocate (OCA) is supporting NAL's plan & says it "has the potential of benefiting the consumer through significantly lower fares & benefiting the air carrier through increased traffic."

Transportation Dept. has also come out in favor of NAL's plan, describing it as a "potential cost breakthrough for the traveling public."

In the meantime, other airlines have asked CAB to approve their versions of "no-frills" air travel.

The Consumer Advocate's Office welcomes comments on these plans. Comments should be sent, as soon as possible, to Office of the Consumer Advocate, Civil Aeronautics Board, Washington, DC 20428.

Clip this form, fill in blanks, write your comments & mail to agency noted in CONSUMER REGISTER item.

This is my opinion on (title of item in CONSUMER REGISTER) _____

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Rate Register

● Trans-World Airlines' (TWA) proposed discount plan for youths, families & persons over 65 [CONSUMER NEWS: March 15] is still pending before Civil Aeronautics Board (CAB). Consumers may wish to comment on this plan—preferably by April 14—by writing to Office of Consumer Advocate, Civil Aeronautics Board, Washington, DC 20428.

● Amtrak (National Railroad Passenger Corp.), which provides more than 90% of the country's intercity rail passenger service, is offering its passengers a special round-trip coach excursion fare of \$99 from New York or Chicago to all Florida cities having Amtrak service. The excursion fare from cities closer to Florida is also \$99, but the savings are less as the distance to Florida becomes shorter.

This service will be available any day of the week between April 7 & June 30 & is one of Amtrak's experimental fare changes designed to stimulate off-season travel to Florida.

The spring excursion fare is fixed at \$99. This means consumers who travel the greatest distance—between Chicago & southern Florida—save the most money (\$49) because the regular fare between those 2 cities is \$148. No stopovers are permitted on the spring excursion fare, & children's (age 2 to 11) half-fare of \$49.50 is the only discount allowed. Amtrak says in some cases its family plan to Florida could save families more money than the excursion plan & suggests these travelers compare the 2 plans. Amtrak's family plan [CONSUMER NEWS: Feb. 1] is good all year, Monday through Thursday, plus Saturday. It applies to first class as well as coach fares whenever the one-way adult fare is \$20 or more. Head of family pays regular fare, spouse & children age 12-21 pay 75% of regular fare, & children age 2 to 11 pay 37½% of the regular fare.

● On March 25, Interstate Commerce Commission (ICC) granted most of the nation's railroads a 7% freight rate increase, effective on or about April 12. [On Jan. 30 ICC suspended the railroad's proposed increase, & on Feb. 20 the railroads asked the commission to reconsider the suspension.] Some items were exempted from the rate increases. Among the exemptions are: materials used in depressed automotive & building industries; some materials scheduled for recycling; & sugar beets. In addition, ICC placed limits on increases for iron & steel scrap & processed foods, fresh fruits & vegetables & nuts.

